

Henry S. Overholt House
1526 Frick Avenue
West Overton
Westmoreland County
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-5655

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HENRY S. OVERHOLT HOUSE

HABS No. PA-5655

Location: 1526 Frick Avenue (formerly Overholt Street), West Overton, Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania. 100 yards north of intersection of Frick Avenue and County Road 751.

UTM Connellsville Quad 17/622201/4441500

Present Owner: West Overton Museums

Present Occupant: Vacant; awaiting restoration and museum interpretation

Significance: The Henry S. Overholt House is the earliest second-generation family dwelling built in the West Overton distilling complex, reflecting the growth and development of the Overholt Company and the related community of West Overton.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: circa 1845. Henry S. Overholt and family were living in their own house in 1850; it was probably built just prior to Henry's marriage to Abigail Carpenter on February 10, 1846. On May 29, 1854, Abraham Overholt, the founder of the distilling business, deeded a one-half interest in the complex to Henry, his eldest son. The deed described a plot of 253 acres "on which are erected houses, outhouses, a griss marchant [sic] mill, distillery, barn, stables and the village of Overton with many other valuable improvements."¹ The house was depicted on county atlas maps of 1857, 1867, and 1876, and is prominent in the lithographic view of the complex in the 1876 atlas.²
2. Architect: Not known.
3. Original and Subsequent owners: The following is an incomplete chain of title for the land on which the building stands, tax parcel # 47-14-5-2. Reference is to the Recorder of Deeds, Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania. A complete summary of the lands of Abraham Overholt and heirs until 1906, of which this building is a part, is to be found in the archives of the West Overton Museums, Box 6, Folder XX.

¹Deed Book 36, page 584, Westmoreland County Courthouse.

²New Illustrated Atlas of Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania (Reading, PA: A. M. Davis Co., 1876).

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- 1854 Deed May 29, 1854, Book 36, page 584
Abraham Overholt and wife Maria [Stauffer]
to
Henry S. Overholt (son)
1/2 interest in the whole, with lifetime rights to the use of the mansion
reserved for the parents.
- 1870 Henry S. Overholt died intestate on June 18, 1870. The half interest in his
property went to his children, Maria C. Overholt et al., under the
guardianship of John S. R. Overholt.
- 1873 Deed August 18, 1873, Book 81, page 252
John S. R. Overholt, guardian for Maria C. Overholt et al.
to
Aaron S. R. Overholt (son of Rev. John D. Overholt, nephew to Abraham)
et al.
1/2 interest
- 1873 Deed August 18, 1873, Book 81, page 251
Christian S. Overholt and Martin S. Overholt, executors of estate of
Abraham Overholt
to
Aaron S. R. Overholt and Benjamin F. Overholt (son of Henry)
remaining 1/2 interest
- 1878 Deed September 11, 1878, Book 96, page 557
Aaron S. R. Overholt and Benjamin F. Overholt
to
Sarah (wife of Aaron S. R.) Overholt and Maria, Abbie, Abraham C.,
Henry C., and Jennie Overholt (children of Henry S. Overholt, siblings of
Benjamin F. Overholt)
- 1890 Deed May 31, 1890, Book 197, page 52.
Maria C. Overholt, et al.
to
Abraham C. Overholt, et al.
- 1923 Abraham C. Overholt died on January 31, 1923. His wife, Gertrude,
inherited.
- 1929 Deed October 31, 1929, Book 902, page 288 (contains plot plan).
Gertrude T. Overholt, widow, et al.
to
Charles Harmon and Hugh Farrell

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- 1947 Deed July 1, 1947, Book 1316, page 49.
Charles Harmon
to
Elizabeth Eckman
- 1963 Deed February 7, 1963, Book 1852, page 867
Elizabeth Eckman
to
Inez Elizabeth Eckman
- 1989 Deed March 15, 1989, Book 2533, page 425
Inez Elizabeth Eckman
to
Westmoreland-Fayette County Historical Society, the present owners, who
have changed their name to West Overton Museums.

Census records indicate that the family of Henry S. Overholt lived in the house by 1850 with two unrelated people (one a laborer) and in 1860 with three unrelated people (one a teamster). By 1870, the family, then consisting of six children, was listed without boarders. In 1880 the census listed Abigail, Henry's widow, as the head of household, with all the children living there. By 1900 Abraham C. Overholt (second son of Henry) was probably living at this house. He was manager of the mill/distillery until 1907 when it separated from the village and coke works, which in turn remained under the company name of A. C. Overholt.

The property itself was always part of the company's holdings; Henry was never personally taxed for the property. In 1890 Abraham C. put the property in his wife Gertrude's name, and in 1929 she sold it out of the family. It is after this point, and probably after 1947, that the house was subdivided for apartments.

4. Builders and suppliers: not known.
5. Original plans: No original plans or drawings have been found. The small schematic drawing on the 1876 atlas map shows one feature that does not appear on the 1867 map: the small porch inset on the north elevation. However, there is no physical evidence of alterations or additions to the fabric, so we must assume that the 1876 map is simply more accurate. Both maps and the 1876 view indicate a large brick outbuilding with X-shaped ventilation openings to the rear of this house, but they differ slightly in the exact position indicated.
6. Alterations and additions: Although an iron balcony which formerly spanned the facade at the second-floor level has been removed, all other changes to the house have been limited to the interior. They will be described in a later section of this report.

B. Historical Context:

For general information on West Overton and the Overholt Company, see the HABS report, HABS No. PA-5654.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: As the first substantial building of the second generation at West Overton, the Henry S. Overholt house continues his father's example of sober and orderly Greek Revival design. Its position in the village underscores its importance, being both closest to the mills and the mansion, and at the head of the line of lesser workers' dwellings. Its size (virtually three times the size of the workers' houses), its balcony, the elaboration of the front door with sidelights and transom, and even the facade type (the front portion of the house constitutes a two-thirds "Georgian" plan, an urban and sophisticated type) all contrast with the lesser dwellings nearby. However, the overall architectural detail, including window treatments, cornices and the brick material, emphasizes the unity of the village as a whole and recalls the sober and egalitarian Mennonite heritage of the Overholts.
2. Condition of the fabric: The exterior masonry and the roof are sound and in generally good condition; the basement walls have recently been repaired. However, drainage is poor and water enters through both the roof and the basement walls.³ The interiors of the first floor have been subdivided into small apartment units and on the second floor, stud partitions had begun to be installed for this purpose; some of the trim (backbands, especially) have been removed in this process. Most fireplace mantels remain or are on site, but the original cast-iron coal grates have more often been removed.

B. Description of the Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The house is approximately 32' x 70', two stories with attic, over a full basement. The ground slopes gently downward to the south, so the basement has excellent light and ventilation through 3/4 height windows and three full doors level to the exterior. The street facade is the shorter one, with fenestration of side door and two windows. There is an inset porch on the first and second floors on the northeast facade, just beyond the mid-point to the rear. Though a stone slab still in the ground indicates there was a short flight of steps, giving access from the porch to the ground level, originally there was no exterior stair between levels.

³Draft Architectural Conservation Survey, January 24, 1990, by Wank Adams Slavin Associates, West Overton Museums Archives.

2. Foundations: The foundations (1'-9" thick throughout) are of sandstone on the upslope or northeast side, but brick to the ground level on the front, downslope (southwest) and most of the rear sides (south of the rear basement door). The top course of the sandstone foundations is dressed with grooved tooling, the second course and the interlocking corner blocks (not raised as quoins) are roughly squared, and all else is made of rubble field stone.
3. Wall construction: The walls (1'-2" thick) are constructed of a uniform machine-molded fire brick of a light red color; this was painted yellow at an early period, giving the whole a mellow cast. The front and southwest sides are common bond, and the northeast and rear sides are six-course American bond. Thus it is clear that the front and side toward the mansion and the mills were considered the primary sides, while the northeast side with its inset porch was the conceptual rear. All four sides have alternating corbel courses with projecting bricks at the eaves. These cornices terminate at the corners with stepped sandstone blocks.
4. Structural system, framing: The exterior and most original walls of the interior are load-bearing brick; there is one partition wall on the second floor, by all indications original, which is made of early sash-sawn studs (4" x 4") with lath and plaster (of a very soft crumbly brown with lots of horsehair). The joists (2 1/4" x 9 3/4") show the straight vertical kerf marks of the nineteenth-century sash saw, with occasional hewn faces. The hipped roof is presently supported by a tilted braced queen post and purlin system, probably added somewhat after the common rafter roof was already in place. This is indicated by the fact that the plate for the queen posts and their back braces is laid on top of the floor and in no way are integrated to the floor framing. The rafters (2 3/4" x 5 7/8") are sash-sawn and have no taper; the queen posts (5 3/4" x 3 3/4") and the braces (3 3/4" x 4") are sash-sawn and oak. The purlins are lap-jointed and slightly trenched to the rafters. Said trenches are cut with an adze, but much of the lumber on this roof, particularly the ridge pole (1 3/16" x 6 1/2") and the roofers (1" x randomly 9 1/4" to 1"), but also the dormer plates (3 5/8" x 2 7/8") and dormer studs (3" x 2 3/4") show both sash-saw and circular-saw kerf marks, indicating a relatively early introduction of the latter technology. The braces are notched to the queen post and purlins, but not mortised; the queen post is mortised at both ends, and the back braces are mortised at both ends.
5. Porches: The front steps are constructed of dressed sandstone. The stairway is parallel to the facade of the building, approaching it from the northeast, with a small landing at the doorway. Sections of cast-iron railing remain at the landing level. The balcony across the front at the second-floor level was presumably similarly of cast iron, but it has been removed.

The northeast porches were originally simple decks with wood floors and ceilings. The second-floor deck was reached from the landing of the main stairs in the side passage, and from each of the adjacent rooms. Originally there was no exterior stair connecting these decks (this is attested to by joist pockets to the side of the

present stair opening); however, two different sets of steps have latterly been constructed. The first of these was a very steep straight run; the present steps, already in serious disrepair, are of moderate rise and require a landing and change of angle part way up. The opening of these twentieth-century stairs through the deck has weakened it to the point that it sags considerably; the railing appears to have been replaced.

6. Chimneys: There are four chimneys, all located southwest of the ridge, of which all have been rebuilt above the roofline. The front chimney serves three fireplaces, in the basement and front parlors (first and second floors); the second one serves one fireplace, in the basement, and has a second flue for a heating stove above; the third stack serves fireplaces on the two dwelling floors only; and the rear stack serves a large fireplace in the basement, plus a standard one on the first floor.
7. Openings:
 - a. Doorways: The front door is recessed and spanned by a sandstone lintel. Though it is presently boarded, enough can be seen to confirm that the original front doorway composition included the sidelights and transom typical of western Pennsylvania Greek Revival. The original door is missing.
 - b. Windows: The windows and their panes vary in size. Most of them (all those on the first floor and on the rear and sides of the second floors) are double-hung sash with six large panes (10" x 1'-4") and slender muntins (5/8") in each. The basement windows are 3/4 that size, with six panes over three. The dormer windows have the same configuration of panes but they are smaller. The second-floor parlor's front windows (Type A on sheet 7 of the HABS drawings) are the most unusual, being of extra length (like French doors, they extend to the floor to provide access to the balcony). The configuration is six panes over nine, with extra long panes (10" x 1'6"); pockets in the walls and lintels above allowed these extra long lower sash to be raised to the height of the upper sash.
8. Roof: The roof is hipped in form, and covered with uniform slate shingles. There are three wood-framed gable dormers, sided with slate.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:
 - a. Cellar: Although much of the basement substructure has been rebuilt, enough remains of the original material to confirm both the configuration and treatment of the lower rooms. It is the variety of treatments that make

this space significant, for the basement configuration must reflect the main masonry bearing walls above. The slope to the ground allows ample lighting to the southwest, with one to three windows in each room, and a door in all but one of these rooms. It is not surprising, therefore, that some of these rooms are finished, and nearly as well as the second-floor rear rooms above. In fact, all the southwest rooms are covered with plaster and lath, and the brick walls parged in plaster as well. The work kitchen (at the rear) had a brick floor, and, though the evidence is obscure, it is possible that the front basement rooms had framed floors of wood (the middle room still contains much of a twentieth-century version of such). The exterior doors are four-panel type with transoms; window trim features identical backbands to those on the second floors. Such domestic finish in a basement space is unusual.

The remaining rooms, on the north side of the house, are not given such a relatively refined finish. The floor joists are exposed and simply whitewashed, as most basements would be. The floors are paved with large slate slabs. The space under the porch is in fact outside the basement itself (though only accessible from it). If the plaster ceilings of the southwest basement rooms may be considered a form of insulation, it is fascinating that its limitation to the rooms under the formal chambers follows the pattern of traditional architecture of the Germans in the eastern counties of Pennsylvania, whence the Overholts came. The Pennsylvania Germans are known for specialized floor insulation. The initial practice there was to limit the basement to the space under the stube and kammer (i.e., the "dwelling" spaces only); the spaces under the service parts of the house (kitchen or side-hall circulation space) was left undug. In later houses with full basements and catted or dirt-filled insulation, the side hall (if not the kitchen) could, like the hallway itself, be left cold. This is the same pattern we find at the Henry S. Overholt house.

- b. First floor: The basic floorplan of the Henry S. Overholt house is comprised of a two-thirds "Georgian" or side-passage plan, with a range of rooms extending to the rear. However, unlike the narrower backhouses of urban lots, the rear extension here is the full width of the house. The two main rear rooms are roughly the same size as the front parlors, and the inset porch is the same width as the side passage. This leaves one small room, the width of the passage, to the rear of the porch. The main stair is open and faces the front door on the outside wall of the side passage, and a secondary stair is enclosed between the two larger rear rooms, descending toward the outside wall.

In the twentieth century the first floor has been divided into two apartments, possibly when the family (Gertrude T. Overholt) sold the building to Charles Harmon and Hugh Farrell in 1929 or more likely when they sold it to the Eckmans in 1947. Each of the front rooms was cut in

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two (partitions front to back), the side passage in three, and the ceilings lowered, except in the stair hall. The doorways between the front unit and the rear were blocked.

- c. Second floor: The basic floor plan of the second floor is identical to the first (as per the masonry bearing walls), except for the addition of two stud partition walls. One creates a small room at the front of the upstairs side-passage, and the other runs down the center of the middle rear room. That there are original doors to the northeast porch on both sides of this latter partition confirms that it was an original feature, not an afterthought. However, the doorway connecting these two rooms is an afterthought: the presence of wallpaper underneath the trim, the jagged line of the hacking cut on this edge, and the mean quality of the trim itself (rough and without molding) all confirm this. Additionally, the door from the master bedroom to the small one northeast of it is similarly cut through at a later date, making the latter seemingly inaccessible originally. The master bedroom and the room southeast of it were accessible only via the service stair.

These mysteries in turn shed light on the function of the porch. It might seem that this space would be an exceedingly private space, inset into (rather than projecting out from) the conceptually inferior (American bond) side of the building, facing an alleyway, a space for taking the air, removed above the mosquitoes, a retreat for private reverie, perhaps. But this is a projection of modern values onto the space; rear porches in the nineteenth century were generally on the first floor and were for work, forming part of the dooryard. And in the nineteenth century, concepts of privacy were less emphatic than now as well; "taking the air" was a social activity which one did on the front porch, within view and hailing distance of one's neighbors and passing friends, in an age when traffic was slow enough to hear, respond, and easily stop and conjoin your hospitality.

All this would limit the probability that the inset porch was intended for private purposes. What then is left? We return to the doorways to the rear rooms, both cut through in later times, and to the several doors leading out onto this porch. It becomes clear now that the exterior doors do not lead out so much as in; the only access to all three of the second-floor rear rooms is (directly or indirectly) via this exterior porch space. Thus the primary function of this space is, like the hallway to the fore of it, circulation, the passage of people, rather than their rest and relaxation.

One might wonder as well why such a circulation space was relegated outside the walls, forcing people in the house to go outside and back in to get to the rear rooms. Why not simply extend the hallway, make it longer, but keep it inside? The answer, albeit more conjectural, seems to be found in the doors again, or rather in the multiplicity of transom lights above them. Each door on the second floor (and many on the first) opening into

either the porch or the stair passage has such a transom, each of which can be opened, admitting air as well as light. Thus each room can have full cross-ventilation, another kind of circulation. The Overholts, conscious of the latest technologies and integrating the functions of their "factories" and businesses, were evidently similarly aware of the latest theories regarding their own health, and built their house to incorporate such concerns. The inset porch provides greater access of each room to fresh air, even if it requires us to pass outside again to get to them.

This outside passage also devalues the function of these hinder rooms as well, leading to the speculation that they might have been servant's quarters. It was not, of course, at all uncommon for families of many economic stations in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to harbor distantly related or unrelated persons within the fold, whether they be indentured servants (earlier), or apprentices, or hired hands (later), or favorite grandchildren. The Overholts, of course, participated in this extended system, for according to the 1850 census, for instance, Henry Overholt had most of his weaving crew (John McGiffin, George Bosh and Solomon Landis) dwelling under his roof; the patriarch Abraham had (in addition to his wife and son Christian) John Cough (whose family were coopers), Henry and Maria Evendole ("from Germany"), Ann Leighty (in-law), Margaret McCelevy (servant?) and Jackson Byerly ("laborer") under his roof. At the house in question, it is quite possible that Charles Taylor, 17, "laborer," and Maria Stonecker (servant?) lived in the upper rear rooms in 1850, or that Thomas and Benjamin Carpenter (untaxed unrelated teenagers) and John Harn (a 23-year-old "teamster") lived there, whereas by 1870 and 1880 Henry S. Overholt's own family had grown to six children and the census takers list no others, even though some of the children are already "at school."

An extensive inventory of Henry S. Overholt's property was made at his (apparently premature) death in 1870, the same year as his father's. Though it lists 172 separate lots of items in the domestic realm (and continues with another 292 lots for the mills and outbuildings on other sheets of a different size), it does not specify either the name or the boundaries of the rooms themselves. Thus it is difficult to be certain exactly how the functions of the rooms were conceived. Nevertheless some informed conjectures can be made, based on the groupings of objects the lists do exhibit. The list is interspersed with lots for "ven[itian] blinds" and "window curtains," clustered sometimes with "mantel ornaments and fixtures"; it must be assumed that each such cluster represents passage to another room, and that mention of stair carpeting indicates passage to another floor, or at least past the stairs (to the attic, for instance).

Item one on the list is a bed. Though we can safely assume that this does not indicate a bed was just inside the door in the side passage/stair hall, it does lead to the interesting conjecture that the primary main-floor rooms were used as

bedrooms. (This accords with the higher degree of finish given to the upstairs parlors, as described in a succeeding section.) Lots 4 and 11 are both "blinds," and lot 6 is for "window curtains"; there are lots for "beds" at #1 and 9, probably indicating that both first-floor front rooms were slept in. Lots 17 (a clock) through 23 (a looking glass) seem to be for a dining room, containing "Cupboard and contents," "silver spoons," "knives and forks," and a bell (worth 75 cents), possibly for summoning servants. Item 24, "tin ware," indicates a shift to a service area, probably the kitchen, which is confirmed by the next two lots, for a "dough tray" and a "cooking stove." Food-related items such as crocks, churns (one cedar, one cherry), sinks and a meat block continue until item 43, a Franklin stove and item 45, a "large sink with fixtures," possibly indicating that the hind-most room (adjacent to the inset porch) was a scullery (with a separate heat source).

Item 48 is a "stair carpet," probably indicating a return to the front and ascent to the second floor (with only one afterthought coming out from the kitchen, item 49, "lard"). The next item begins a new page, and clearly indicates arrival in the primary rooms, parlors, with a "lounge" (item 50), a dozen chairs, a rocking chair, a marble stand and fixtures, a set of mantel ornaments, ottomans, a looking glass and, most significantly, a "center table and books," the classic accoutrement of the well outfitted Victorian parlor. Items 58 and 59 are for "4 ven Blinds" and "4 curtains" (according with the number of windows in this front room); the turkey carpet, mat, and "rocking sofa" between them and the next pair of windows (item 64) may indicate these objects were in the small corner room at the front of the stair passage. Items 65 to approximately 74, including maps, oil cloth, regulator, chronometer, stand and more stair carpet (presumably to the attic), a bureau, five chairs and a single set of window blinds, seem to have been in the upstairs stairhall. Items approximately 72 through 86, the next curtain and blind, are clearly from the second parlor, and include an ottoman, a lamp, a bureau, eight chairs, a rocking chair, mantel ornaments, a stand and fixtures and another "table, cover and fixtures."

The list clearly continues into the upper rear rooms at this point, but the exact configuration becomes less clear. There are, however, beds indicated for each cluster until item 149, which abruptly takes us downstairs to the basement ("15 gallons of apple butter"). Items approximately 87 to 97 seem to be one bedroom (possibly including the lounge and cupboard and county Atlas, and certainly including the bed, three chairs and the rocker), although the next cluster, a men's bedroom with two beds, two chairs, county map, large clock, looking glass, and spittoon, also includes the mantel ornaments which would have to be in the first of the rear rooms (which is the only one among them to have a fireplace). Item 109 is for "stair rods," probably for the rear service stair. The remaining two rooms, back of the stair, are also bedrooms, the corner room having three "ven" blinds and curtains (items 111-12) as well as three chairs, bed, washstand, a "stove and oil cloth" and a lot of "paintings, 8." Somewhere adjacent (there is an extra set of "ven blinds") is a room with a marble washstand, bed, bowl and pitcher, and a lot of "ornaments and 2 paintings." The presence of paintings and fancy washstands

does contradict the architectural evidence of secondary status to these rooms, and belies the conjecture that they sheltered servants and working men boarders. Another anomaly in the inventory is lots 142-3, both of which list four "ven blinds," amounting to more unaccounted-for windows than exist in the house. It is possible that they are for the basement windows (of which there are six), in which case the adjacent bed, chairs, ottomans, comforts, coverlets and quilts (lots 140-146) would be downstairs, in the finished front rooms of the basement, as well.

As noted above, lots 149 and following are clearly for the basement service spaces. Along with a Franklin stove and tubs, sausage grinder, meat saws, barrels of vinegar, and the apple butter, are a bath, a "wash. machine", a clothes wringer, clothes basket, table, copper kettle, coal buckets, garden tools, and a quilt frame. Though the order is again not as clear as one might wish, it is likely there were separate rooms for fuel, a laundry and heavy food preparation. The quilt frame could have been used in one of the basement front rooms (the front corner had the most light with three windows) or taken upstairs.

2. Stairways: The main stair is an open well in the side hall, on the outside wall. It is elegantly finished with turned balusters and a large faceted (tapered octagonal) newel post. (This post is tenoned through the floor where it is both pinned and wedged firm.) The treads are an ample 10" deep and the whole an inch shy of 4' wide; the full finish continues to the attic level, despite the low roof angle which forces a 4' crawl space opening to the full attic. The wall below the steps is panelled with joined wood; the outside walls are plastered.

The service stair, between the larger rear rooms, is enclosed with random-width boards (4 1/2" to 6 1/4"; 3/4" thick). Being an "inferior" space, this stair is the only element in the house that retains its original paint (based on surface visual examination only). The wall of the main floor has been grained to resemble golden oak; the second floor was painted possibly gray/blue originally. The architrave of the service steps (both floors) are among the simplest in the house, being a plain flat surface with inner bead (1/2"), but without backband. Like the baseboards, this architrave is painted a deep red; the door itself and other trim in the adjacent room is a pewter gray. The inside of the door to the attic is perhaps the clearest example of the probable original paint scheme (and of the Overholt's Germanic aesthetic heritage, as well): the stiles and rails are painted deep red, and the panels yellow.

3. Flooring: Random-width boards.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: The walls and ceilings are all plastered, except for the triangular space under the first-floor grand stair, which is panelled wood. Most walls were apparently painted white; several have now been papered.
5. Woodwork: The pattern of hierarchy in the elaboration of mantels and other trim identifies the second-floor parlors as the conceptually (as well as literally)

"superior" spaces. This is perhaps most clearly shown by the mantels, which in the upper front parlor features a kind of three-dimensional curving bracket pilaster. Unfortunately, the mantel in the first-floor front parlor has been removed, although a hearth attests to its position. Neither rear parlor on the first or second floor had a fireplace, though both have flues for a heat stove. The fireplace mantels that remain in the first-floor rear rooms are virtually identical; those for the second floor have been removed. They are markedly simpler than the surviving parlor mantel, having a plain flat pilaster and architrave composition surrounding ornamental cast-iron coal grates. Another mantel of virtually identical design is found unattached in the basement, but it is unclear whether this was originally installed in the basement fireplace or in one of the upstairs rear rooms.

Except for the plain flat trim of the service stair, all doors and windows in the house carry the same architrave molding: a flat piece 7 3/4" wide with a 1/2" inner bead and a broad, low 3" backband, molded in an ogee (cyma reversa) curve. (The twentieth-century "renovations" have caused several of these to be removed, but very clear ghosts remain.) There are hierarchical variations, however. The windows and doors of the parlors and stair passage, up stairs and down, all have shouldered architraves (Type B on sheet 7 of HABS drawings), but none of the rear rooms do. Furthermore, the baseboards differ in the front and rear parts of the house, those in the parlors being more elaborate with an extra "trench" below the top ogee curve. And finally, the bases of the door architraves in the upper parlors have larger beveled plinth blocks; the blocks below are not beveled. Thus the conceptual primacy belongs to the upper rooms, those which appropriately open onto the balcony. There does not seem originally to have been a crown molding in any of the rooms.

In the twentieth century, probably as late as 1947, alterations were made to create two apartments on the first floor. As reported in the section on floor plans, this involved adding flimsy partition walls (of 2" x 4" studs and plasterboard) bisecting the original first-floor rooms, as well as dropping the ceilings. These elements are outfitted with modern woodwork, including a minimal stepped molding; baseboards here seem to be pieced together from flat fascias and parts of the original ogee backbands removed from the windows. There are also small crown moldings which seem to be these same backbands, set upside-down.

6. Heating: The building was originally heated by means of the combination of coal grates in some rooms and iron heating stoves in others, as indicated by the presence of fireplaces or simple flues described in the section "chimneys," above. In the early twentieth century, after the lower fireplace ceased to be used for any cooking, a large "octopus" type forced hot-air system was installed.

D. Site:

1. General setting: The house faces southeast onto Frick Street, formerly Overholt Street. The immediate lot was originally bounded to the northeast by a short alley which connected to a second one parallel to Overholt Street, running thus behind the "sheds" or tenant houses associated with the houses on the main way (Overholt Street).
2. Outbuildings: The 1876 atlas view shows one outbuilding directly behind the house. It was a brick gable-roofed building with X-shaped ventilators. Another outbuilding was directly behind the store next door, on the other side of a lane between them. It is a three-story brick barn, with an arcaded forebay and X-shaped ventilators above. It may have served the Henry S. Overholt House; by 1866 Henry S. Overholt was also (personally) taxed for five horses and four cows, and by 1867 for four horses and six cows, so he would have needed it. In fact, that his animal assessment doubled in 1866 (from two of each the year before) may indicate that this barn was built in that year.
3. Landscaping, enclosures: The 1876 Atlas view depicted a line of at least seven small trees along Overholt Street in front of this house. There was also a sidewalk and a picket fence, both conspicuously absent on the other side of the street, where a tenement apparently containing several workers' families in 1880 (as well as other workers' housing) was located. The picket fence appeared to enclose the entire yard, running parallel to the street approximately 75 yards to the corner of Felgar's Run and Overholt Street, which was then crossed by the West Overton spur of the Mt. Pleasant and Broad Ford Railroad, later acquired by the Pennsylvania Railroad. The fence then headed northwest along the stream several hundred yards beyond the large barn and stable, almost to the coke works. Between the house and the stream it enclosed a grove of at least fourteen substantial trees, planted in a grid formation, under which people were playing croquet. Beyond the grove, between the barn and the stream, were vegetable gardens. The area between the house and the Jacob O. Tinstman store (next building up Overholt Street), through which originally passed the short alley, is presently a lawn mowed by the West Overton Museums, but the grove and the gardens have been neglected and have reverted to a state of nature.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Maps and Atlases:

Beers, S. N. and D. G. Atlas of Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania. Philadelphia: A. Pomeroy, 1867.
Page 23: map of West Overton

Davis, F. A. New Illustrated Atlas of Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania, 1876 with 1971

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Supplementary Section. Rimersburg, PA: Pennsylvania Record Press, 1971; originally published by Reading Publishing Company, 1876.
Page 51: map of West Overton. Buildings identical to 1867 map, names different.
Page 53: full-page, perspective view of West Overton. Detailed and informative.
Page 80: map of West Overton, with slightly different buildings than page 51, also railway and coke ovens.

Lake, D. J., and N. S. Ames. Map of Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania. New York: Wm. J. Barker, 1857.
Includes map of "Overton," with buildings indicated schematically.

D. Bibliography:

U.S. Census, Population Schedules, 1850, 1860, 1870, 1880.

Deed books, Westmoreland County Courthouse, Greensburg, PA.

Tax assessment records, Westmoreland County Courthouse, Greensburg, PA.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

Documentation of the West Overton site was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record, a division of the National Park Service, in conjunction with America's Industrial Heritage Project and the West Overton Museums. The project was under the direction of Gray Fitzsimons, HAER Historian, and Joseph Balachowski, HABS Architect. Documentation was begun in 1990 by Victoria Fleming (University of Florida), Supervisor; architects Janet Chen (Illinois Institute of Technology), Robert G. Colosimo (Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, through ICOMOS), and Richard J. P. Renaud (Lawrence Technological University); and historian Charles Bergengren (University of the Arts, Philadelphia). This historical report was edited in the HABS office by Alison K. Hoagland, HABS senior historian, in 1991-92.